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Secretary Shultz

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Unity and Dissent: On the Community of Free Nations

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Following is an address by Secretary Shultz before the American Jewish Committee, Washington, D.C., May 15, 1986.

I appreciate so much the warmth of your welcome and your beautiful statement. It is an honor to receive this award [the American Liberties Medallion], and I am really delighted to have a chance to be here and to address you.

Two months ago, while on an official visit to Athens, I had the pleasure of an early morning tour of the Acropolis. My guide was a young American archaeologist. He described in some detail the friezes on the Parthenon: the seemingly endless struggles between the ancient Greeks and their warlike neighbors; battles in which a center of civilization and culture sought to defend itself against repeated assault. The Parthenon, and its haunting past, capture what Yeats called "tragedy wrought to its utmost"—the destruction of a civilized community.

The Jewish people, like the ancient Greeks, have known in their long history the kind of tragedy carved on the shattered friezes of the Parthenon. They know that no people determined to ensure their own survival can hold any illusions about the vulnerability of a center of civilization in a world threatened by forces of barbarian violence.

These stark impressions of that early morning tour of the Acropolis have been with me in recent weeks as our own country has dealt with challenges to its security by violent assaults from those who would bring fear and chaos to our community. Tonight, I would like to share with you some thoughts about how we are winning this struggle—and what we still must do to achieve our civilization's triumph over totalitarianism and barbarism.

My subject tonight goes to the heart of what everyone gathered in this room represents. The American Jewish Committee—like the Jewish people and, indeed, like Israel itself—seeks to safeguard a culture and a people through a community of effort. You know that a community is more than just a collection of individuals; more than the separate resources they bring together. A community is the vessel for the ideals and values a people hold in common. An individual of extraordinary character can represent and can lead a community. But no individual, no matter how strong or devoted, can secure his ideals alone; only a community can defend, nurture, and enable its ideals to flourish from one generation to another.

But we must recognize the tremendous role that individual leadership and examples play. And I can't help but to reflect on the example and the heroism, the flame that has been kept burning there by Natan Shcharanskiy. He never gave up. He stuck to his guns.

The other day he visited me in my office. I could hardly get him into my office because everybody there wanted to shake his hand and say hello, and we talked, of course, about his confinement, about Soviet Jewry. And after we talked, we got in my car together—that great big thing I ride around in—and we rode over to the White House. While we were riding over there, he was telling me about his experiences, his confinement for over a year. He sat in a cell with nothing in it in about half the size of that automobile, but he persevered. And from that cell he rallied people in every part of the world behind the great cause of Soviet Jewry and the great cause of freedom.

Through it all somehow he kept his incredible sense of humor. We just can't get enough of this guy. His spirit is what the love of liberty makes possible. And, of course, when we talked about Soviet Jewry, he gave us his views about how to handle it, from which we benefited, and we agreed—and I'm sure all of you agree—that whatever our tactics of the moment may be, we must never compromise, we must never give up, we must keep the faith with this cause.

I thought you might like to meet the wonderful lady who managed the negotiations to get Shcharanskiy free for the President. She happens to be here tonight—Roz Ridgway [Rozanne L. Ridgway, Assistant Secretary for European and Canadian Affairs].

I was speaking about the importance of a community to defend its ideals so that they flourish from one generation to another. The Jewish people have borne witness to this truth over the centuries. It was a fact of Jewish life long before the cause we share today—the community of Western civilization—had emerged on the world stage.

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Indeed, the Jewish people helped to bring that civilization to life, infusing it with their religious genius, with the sanctity of the individual, the importance of tradition, and the powerful integrity of a community defined by culture and religious values.

Today, as yesterday, Western civilization would be unthinkable without the contributions of the Jewish community. As we learned from the Holocaust—the most barbaric assault on humanity in our time and, let us pray, of all time—the destiny of the Jewish people and the rest of the civilized world is joined in a ceaseless struggle to defend community against enduring assaults by forces hostile to our way of life.

The Jewish community has survived centuries of persecution and dispersion because Jews throughout the world have kept faith with their common heritage. So, too, the continuity of modern civilization requires that all members of the community of nations—Americans and Israelis, Europeans and Japanese, Latin Americans, Africans, and others of the developing world who seek democracy—make common cause in defending our highest values and our way of life.

American Jewry's staunch support for Israel is an outstanding example of dedication to our shared heritage. In the modern world, our sense of community is enriched by different histories, different customs, different religions, and languages. But the civilization we share transcends these differences and joins us in a community that is stronger for the diversity each of us brings to it.

I am speaking tonight about our modern community, about what is required for its protection and propagation, not only from those of us here but from the larger collective we are part of: the community of like-minded nations.

A Community of Like-Minded Nations

The very idea of a community among nations is unique. From the city-states of ancient Greece to the modern nations of our era, communities have had to join forces to defend their individual interests. Economic, political, and military conditions have their own imperatives, requiring shifting alliances and coalitions of expedience. But the contemporary community of nations—a free association based on shared principles and an increasingly shared way of life—emerged only with the evolution of the democratic idea. Just as free peoples choose their governments, so do free nations choose their friends and allies. We are joined not just by common interests but by ideals that transcend the dictates of necessity.

This community has long been a minority of humanity. In our own time, however, we have seen our numbers increase. In recent decades we have been joined by like-minded nations around the Pacific Basin; by the struggling young democracies of Latin America; and, of course, by Israel, whose very existence is a constant reminder of what may be required if civilization is to be secured. Together, we stand for something that no other alliance in history has represented: the advancement of the rights of the individual; the conviction that governments founded on these rights are, in Lincoln's phrase, "the last best hope of men on earth."

Our community and our heritage have enemies. Over the past two centuries, whether separately or in concert, free peoples have defended themselves against marauders and tyrants, militarists and imperialists, against Nazis and the Leninist totalitarians of our time. We have seen our heritage shaken to its roots. The graves of Normandy and the death camps of the Third Reich bear permanent witness to the vulnerability of all we cherish.

Today, we see other evidence of the determination of our adversaries. We see it in the Berlin Wall, a disgrace to humanity and a mute symbol of the fear our civilization and its values evoke in a totalitarian world. The Soviets, of course, have their values as well. They value a regime that imposes an unchallenged order in its own sphere and foments instability and division elsewhere.

And our civilization has other adversaries: in the terrorist networks of the Middle East and Europe; in the communist insurgents that threaten developing nations; in bandits, criminals, and narcotics traffickers who tear at the fabric of society—and in all the states that support these varieties of barbarism. Taken together, they form an army of anarchy marching against the heritage we share and would pass on—and that we will pass on.

These threats draw strength from one another. Entire nations have disintegrated under their pressure. Only a few years ago I visited Beirut as a private citizen. Visitors in those days delighted in the city's gaiety, in its culture, its sophistication and grace. Today, thugs and murderers comb the rubble. No one who has known Beirut's splendid past and its tragic present can dismiss the possibility of anarchy or the evil reality of unconstrained violence.

And Beirut's fate now threatens elsewhere. We see it in Afghanistan, where a society has been shattered, an entire nation forced underground or into exile. We see it in Cambodia, where the Khmer people have been twice ravaged—by Pol Pot's mass slaughter and now by the Vietnamese occupation. And we see it in Latin America, where drug traffickers, thugs like the M-19 group, and communist aggressors menace nations newly devoted to democracy and an open society.

And even in the free world, with our well-established order, we find the marauders of anarchy intruding into our daily lives. Today, the nations of Europe are discovering again that accommodation does not bring immunity to such threats. The vanishing tourist—and we should be ready to travel; let's not be scared out of that—is only one symptom of Europe's heightened vulnerability. Americans, too, stand exposed—both private civilians who are targeted as innocent travelers, and the soldiers, diplomats, and other official personnel who serve our nation abroad.

But these threats have not gone unanswered. The free world has shown that it will not allow life to revert to the condition characterized by Thomas Hobbes three centuries ago as "continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Today our adversaries, who have long underestimated our resolve, are beginning to learn some hard lessons of their own. Our determination is turning the tide of events against them.

That is my message tonight: we have the winning hand. Our enemies are losing. We have to keep this momentum going. We can do it if we understand the challenges and work against our enemies, not against each other.

Defense—Alone or in Concert?

The first obligation of any free nation is its own defense. West Germany's actions against the Baader-Meinhof gang; Italy's suppression of the Red Brigades; the Israeli rescue at Entebbe; America's interception of the *Achille Lauro* murderers; and Japan's actions against the Middle Road Faction: these are all examples of the principle of national self-defense at work.

But many of the threats that come with the modern age are not confined to individual states. Today, ideologues of violence are colluding across borders to undermine our very way of life. The IRA [Irish Republican Army], the PLO

[Palestine Liberation Organization], the Japanese Red Army, M-19, and Sendero Luminoso: these and other groups are in communication; they are cooperating and even coordinating their murderous actions. And they do not operate on their own. Terrorism could not exist on its current scale without aid and encouragement from sovereign states both within the communist world and beyond. This collaboration represents a new axis of aggression against the free world.

Because the challenge these forces pose transcends any one of us, we have a transcendent obligation to meet it together. That effort takes more than determination or will. We must be strong in body as well as in spirit. We must have vital economies. Economic growth, as the American example has demonstrated in recent years, generates the needed resources to sustain military strength. And our social institutions must remain healthy. Government cannot make up for what family, community, and religious organizations fail to provide. We must nurture these institutions, protect them against illegitimate intrusion by the state, and strengthen them against the forces of anarchy.

And we must be strong abroad. Our collective defense depends on an array of strategic, political, economic, and military tools. We are stronger today because we have strengthened many of these tools over the past few years. But others are in disturbing disrepair. We need to take a hard look at these common resources and ask ourselves what we can do to make them more effective.

The Tools of Common Security

We must enhance our mutual defense militarily. In the last few years we have made solid gains: U.S. intermediate-range missiles have been successfully deployed in Europe; Spain has reaffirmed its commitment to NATO; we have made progress with allies on SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] research; and our regional partnerships are strong. The U.S.-Israeli Joint Political-Military Group is now a permanent institution of increasing significance.

Our collective security depends on the nurturing and protection of democracy. Central and South American nations, and the Philippines, are inspiring recent examples. Our community of nations must stand together in constant reaffirmation of the democratic ideals and institutions that keep our civilization vibrant.

Our strategic situation requires economic cooperation among friends and allies. The importance of economic growth has been demonstrated by the worldwide, American-led recovery of the early 1980s; more and more state-run economies are getting the message. And economic assistance is a vital tool: today, Israel is a most dramatic example of how economic assistance can strengthen joint interests. "Operation Independence," an association dedicated to bringing to Israel the vitality of the American business community, is an inspiring example of the best kind of economic cooperation at work.

We are stronger today than we were 10 or even 5 years ago. Our strategic and economic resources are doing their work on behalf of collective security and well-being. To build on these recent gains, we need to make our other assets work as well—for they have suffered from political attack at a time when the need for unity has been increasing. There are some key points that call for recognition.

While always seeking to act with restraint, we must recognize that passivity is sometimes the most dangerous course. We are making progress, but there is much more to do. We reached a remarkable consensus in the proclamation against terrorism of the seven industrial democracies at Tokyo last week. We set forth critical guidelines for the civilized world to follow in responding to its enemies. Yet we must recognize that the Tokyo communique did not come easily. It was the product of bitter lessons: the deaths of Robert Stethem, Leon Klinghoffer, Kenneth Ford, and so many other names from so many other countries. Today, as in the 1930s, the consequence of inaction is never greater security for ourselves and our friends but the emboldening of those who would destroy our community. A vital next step after the Tokyo communique should be passage of the U.S.-U.K. Extradition Treaty, now before the Congress. We might summarize that treaty in a phrase: there is no such thing as a good terrorist.

And we must recognize that action sometimes means military action. There has been less public consensus about the success of our strike against Libya—very warmly supported, widely supported in the United States, but some variation elsewhere. But the results are convincing the skeptics. Qadhafi is in retreat, and Syria is uneasy—a reaction which may induce that country to think hard about involvement in murderous adventures.

As we look for support, so must we support friends whose armed forces are responding to aggression—such as American help to Great Britain during the Falklands war, our recent aid to the French effort against Libya in Africa, and Great Britain's support for us last month. Those who use military force, or help those who do, invariably find themselves immersed in controversy. But it is precisely at such times that solidarity counts. We all noticed that Israel was quick to support our action against Libyan terrorism and aggression.

Let me inject something at this point that some of you may not want to hear. This principle also applies to America's need to support—under carefully limited conditions—Saudi Arabia's effort to defend the Persian Gulf. The danger there is real. If Khomeini-ism advances into that area, America's strategic interests will be harmed—and, needless to say, so will Israel's. There are many in the Arab world who want peace and stability and moderation—and who can be brought to accept the permanent reality of the State of Israel. But if America cannot demonstrate that we are a constant, effective, strong, and responsive presence in the Middle East, those with the best of inclinations inevitably will make their accommodations with those who bear the worst intentions toward us.

Let me say that I well understand your attitudes, and I've talked with Jewish leaders a great deal about this subject, and I want to say to you that when votes come on the question of sustaining the veto of President Reagan, there is an added dimension. Not simply a vote on Saudi arms but a vote on whether we want to say to our President that we support him and the world can see that the President, in the clutch, will have support on something that he feels very deeply about.

Let me conclude by briefly noting some other areas where greater concerted understanding and effort are required.

Trade differences within our international community have been particularly divisive, eroding cooperation and weakening public confidence in the value of our common ties. We must guard especially against protectionist policies, which undermine long-term growth and encourage longrunning divisions.

We need to face the fact that our divisions at home can weaken our unity with friends abroad. The relatively recent constraints on executive action are an impediment to effective

action and undermine our credibility with friends and enemies alike. As an example, the constraints on the use of force embodied in the war powers act practically invite an enemy to wait us out. And they undermine support from allies who might be more willing to go along with us if they were convinced that America would stay the course.

I might say to you that the President sometimes is challenged: "How is it that you sent those Navy planes and brought down that Egyptian plane with the terrorists on it and you didn't get congressional approval before you acted?" And he said: "What kind of nonsense is that?"

And we have to get over the idea that "covert" is a dirty word. Free nations accustomed to open debate are naturally uneasy about covert measures, just as they are uneasy about the ambiguous circumstances that require us to act in secret. Yet we must remember that intelligence breakthroughs and secret operations had a decisive influence on our victories in two world wars.

Today, in our shadow war against terrorism, the use of these instruments is just as imperative. The United States will use such measures legally, properly, and with the due involvement of the designated legislative committees. What is crucial is the ability to take some initiatives quietly, in situations where the more the measures are known, the less effective will be their results.

Recent history has reaffirmed to friends and allies that American influence abroad is a force for liberation and prosperity. Our support for democratic forces in the Philippines; our support for national movements against tyrannical regimes; and our demonstrated willingness to defend our friends and ourselves from attack has given renewed confidence to our allies and to our own public. We are on the move. The contest is going our way.

But recent gains are vulnerable. We are beginning to understand that our enemies' greatest asset is our own disunity. Let us remove all doubt that we and our friends have the potential to mobilize a rich range of capabilities to ensure our security.

The Need for Unity

A community of free nations will always see the expression of differing opinions. Dissent is the sound of freedom and democracy at work. But we need to agree at least on two fundamental points: what we stand for and what we stand against. As [Prime Minister] Bob Hawke, speaking for Australia, said after the U.S. strike against Libya, on these questions we must be, in his words, "at one."

The risks of disunity could not be more profound. Dissent over fundamental issues encourages our adversaries and erodes our cooperation across the range of our relations. And it undermines the security and morale of those who aspire to join us.

The community of civilized nations has known threats since its very inception. Our way of life has survived and flourished despite them. It has withstood global depression and world wars, surviving even in the darkest corners of Nazi-occupied Europe and in the most remote Soviet gulags. But as the Jewish people have known throughout their history, any community that has faith in itself and its values seeks more than mere survival. It seeks to ensure that those values flourish. And above all, it seeks to pass them on proudly and without fear of repression to generations to come.

Our course requires sacrifice—individual and collective, material and human. It requires what Ben Netanyahu [Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations] calls "civic valor"—a will to sacrifice for the common good that springs from faith in ourselves and our way of life. And it requires leadership. Communities of nations, like communities within them, are not abstract enterprises; they are collections of individuals, led by men and women of vision and courage. They are the custodians of our aspirations and our future.

The heroism of individuals like Natan Shcharanskiy teaches that no one struggles alone. That is a truth for nations as well as for men. The United States and Israel, and our friends in Europe and the rest of the world, are embarked on a common course. If we keep faith with one another, and with the heritage that binds us, we will prevail against all challenges to our community. And we will prevail together. ■

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